

HOSTAGE

Tense negotiation in a crisis
Exploring a problem without a solution



MAIN THEMES : Crisis Response and Negotiation

Outline

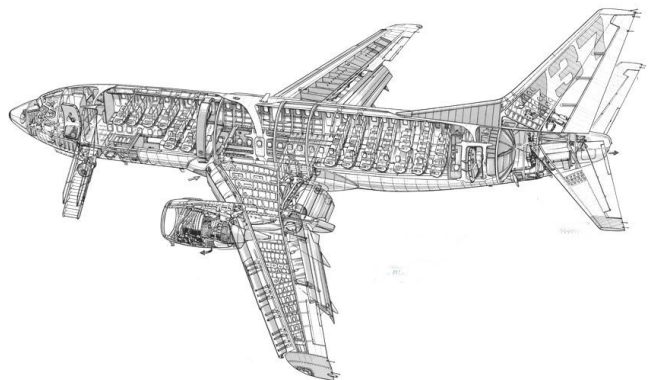
Set in the 1970s, this game is about a hijacked airliner, the crew, hostage takers and the authorities. The game is open-ended and can play out in any number of ways, the key thing being to look at how the teams manage with incomplete information and with a growing crisis that has time pressure and tension built-in.

Important decisions are needed from the outset, and negotiation styles affect how events play out. This includes not only negotiation between the authorities and the hostage takers, but between the various authorities involved in the crisis.

Gameplay

Player teams include the police, airport security, military special forces, the government, the airport owners, airline, and national media.

Game time is moved on relentlessly as the various participants attempt to reach a solution and ensure the survival of the passengers. Some of the issues will be not just between the hostage takers and the security services – issues of government popularity, airport financial viability, demarcation between different agencies, and setting up command and control arrangements in a crisis all come into the gameplay of the *Hostages* game.



The game runs through a series of timed phases and game time passes regardless of whether the players are 'ready for the next turn' – creating a pressure to act, even without complete information.

At the end of the game there is a debrief of the process and how negotiation and communications worked both within and between the teams. Teams have the opportunity to reflect on how their decision making was affected by the low-information environment and the time pressure and how this might inform their practice and planning in future.

Ideal Audiences

- Organisations wishing to practice crisis response and organisational negotiation skills.
- Organisations seeking a team building challenge.
- Students looking at crisis studies or mediation.

Example game structures

Hostage : For 12 players	
Team	Number in team
Hostage takers	3
Airport management & security	3
Police	2
Military	2
Government	2
Total	12

Hostage : for 30 players	
Team	Number in team
Hostage takers	3
Spokespersons for hostage takers	2
Airport security	2
Airport Management	3
Airline Representatives	2
Local Police	3
National Police	3
Government	5
National Media	2
Military High Command	3
Military special forces	2
Total	30